

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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FM AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7359

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY ACCRA

AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L OUAGADOUGOU 2712

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, UV

SUBJECT: LAMIZANA SOWRN IN AS PRESIDENT

1. IN SHORT CEREMONY THIS MORING SANGOULE LYHZANA, IN ACCORDANCE WITH MANDATE OF 1977 CONSITUTION, TOOK OATH AS PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF UPPER VOLTA BEFORE THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY. NO REPEAT NO OPPOSITION MEMBERS ATTENDED THE CEREMONY IN SPITE OF FIRM MESSAGE EARLIER FROM NATIONAL ASSEMBLY PRESIDENT DIRECTING ALL MEMBERS TO MAKE NECESSARY ARRANGEMENTS TO BE IN THE CHAMBER AT THE APPOINTED TIME. THE 28 MEMBER "FRONT UNI DE L'OPPOSITION" CONTINUES TO INSIST--SUPPORTED BY A SUPREME COURT ADVISORY OPINION-- THAT THE ELECTION OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY PRESIDENT BY THE 29 VOTES OF THE PRESIDENTIAL MAJORITY IS ILLEGAL.

2. NATIONAL ASSEMBLY PRESIDENT GERARD K. OUADRAOGO IN BRIEF REMARKS OPENING THE CEREMONY REFERRED TO UPPER VOLTA'S CONFIDENTIAL

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COMMITMENT TO ENGAGE IN "DIFFICULT GAME OF DEMOCRACY" AND TO WORK TOGETHER FOR SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT. HE TOOK SPECIAL NOTE OF THE IMPORTANT ROLE HERETOFORE PLAYED BY THE ARMED FORCES OF UPPER VOLTA, "VALIANT AND FIRM IN THEIR DEDICATION TO THE NATION."

3. COMMENT: OPPOSITION MEMBERS REPORTEDLY MET PREVIOUS

EVENING TO DISCUSS QUESTION OF ATTENDANCE AT PRESIDENT LAMIZANA'S SWEARING IN. THE DECISION NOT TO ATTEND IS A STRONG SLAP IN THE FACE TO PRESIDENT LAMIZANA, AND ONE WHICH WILL LEND SUPPORT TO THOSE ELEMENTS IN THE MILITARY RAPIDLY BECOMING DISENCHANTED WITH UPPER VOLTA'S BID FOR A RETURN TO DEMOCRATIC CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT. NEXT STEPS BY LAMIZANA AND HIS SUPPORTERS ARE UNCLEAR, BUT THE OPPOSITION SNUB AND THE INCREASING EMBARRASSMENT OF GOVERNMENTAL PARALYSIS WILL IMPEL DECISIVE ACTION WITHIN A SHORT TIME. THAT ACTION COULD ENTAIL CONTINUED EFFORTS TO PROCEED WITH ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NEW CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT THROUGH COOPTING OPPOSITION ELEMENTS TO THE DEGREE POSSIBLE. ON THE OTHER HAND, THERE ARE GROWING SIGNS THAT IT MIGHT ULTIMATELY ENTAIL A MILITARY DECISION-- EITHER ON THE PART OF LAMIZANA AND HIS IMMEDIATE CIRCLE, OR ON THE PART OF DISENCHANTED AND RESTIVE YOUNGER OFFICERS -- TO REINVOLVE THE MILITARY IN UPPER VOLTA' S POLITICAL PROCESS. THE DELAY IN SETTING UP THE NEW GOVERNMENT HAS NOT YET REACHED UNCONSCIONABLE LENGTHS, BUT TIME IS RUNNING SHORT. THE NEXT STEP ON THE CONSTITUTIONAL AGENDA--NAMING A PRIME MINISTER--REPORTEDLY MIGHT TAKE PLACE WITHIN A FEW DAYS.

4. ASIDE FROM THE INABILITY TO CONDUCT NORMAL BUSINESS WITH A GOVERNMENT WHICH REMAINS IN A HOLDING PATTERN, PRESENT EVENTS DO NOT IMPACT DIRECTLY ON UPPER VOLTAN--U.S. RELATIONS. EVEN THE REASSERTION OF MILITARY CONTROL WOULD LEAVE US WITH AN
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ACCEPTABLE WORKING RELATIONSHIP SUCH AS WE HAVE HAD IN THE POST WITH THE PREVIOUS MILITARY REGIME. UPPER VOLTA'S PROMISING HUMAN RIGHTS PROGRESS WOULD, HOWEVER, BE DIVERTED FROM COURSE. UPPER VOLTA'S EXPERIMENT IN RETURN TO CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN CLOSELY OBSERVED BY NEIGHBORING MILITARY REGIMES, AND ITS FAILURE CAN BE EXPECTED TO HAVE REPERCUSSIONS IN IMMEDIATE WEST AFRICA. KILLION

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